
Comece: don Barrios Prieto, “let coronavirus not be an excuse to let human beings die in the Mediterranean Sea”

“The pandemic should not be an excuse to let human beings die in the Mediterranean Sea”: this is the warning that came earlier today from Barrios Prieto, general secretary of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (Comece), who calls for “a solidarity mechanism agreed among the member states of the EU” to respond to migrants’ emergency situations at sea. Comece “shares the concerns of the Episcopal Conference of Malta about the fate of 47 people who had been blocked for days on an NGO rescue ship” and have then been brought back to Libya. “Libyan ports are not safe”, father Prieto says, and often people “undergo torture, abuse and inhuman treatments when they are brought back to the countries they embarked from”. Therefore, the EU “should support the member states in making sure migrants and asylum seekers can quickly and safely disembark in the nearest safe European port”, as also laid down by the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organisation. “Despite the difficulties that the Covid-19 pandemic is causing in all the member states of the EU, humanitarian principles must still apply”, and “nobody should be left behind, not even migrants on a rescue ship”.

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